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THE ERROR OF "PSYCHOLOGISM"

(continued)[1]

We have pointed out the deformities, even more gross than the previous ones on other occasions, those that occur in the West, for example that which wants to see in the methods of Yoga a sort of "physical culture" or a therapeutics of a simply physiological order, are, by their very grossness, less dangerous than those which present themselves under more subtle aspects.

The reason is not only that the latter risk seducing minds upon which the others could not have any hold; this reason certainly exists, but there is another, of a much more general scope, which is the very one for which materialist conceptions, as we have explained, are less dangerous than those which appeal to inferior psychism. Now it is incontestable that among the deformations in which the lowest psychism intervenes, those must be classified which pretend to establish a comparison and even a more or less complete assimilation between the same methods of Yoga and the most recent techniques of Western psychology, by which we mean those that belong to the various varieties of "psychoanalysis."

Of course, the purely spiritual goal, which alone essentially constitutes Yoga as such, and without which even the use of that word is only a true derision, is no less totally misunderstood in this latter case than in the one where it is only a question of "physical culture": Yoga is neither a psychical therapeutics nor is it a bodily therapeutics; its procedures are in no way whatever a treatment for any sort of unbalanced people; quite the contrary, they address exclusively beings who, in order to be able to realize the spiritual development which is its only reason for being,

1 See the January 1938 issue. [From here on in the document we will omit these citations.]

must already, by virtue of their mere natural dispositions, be as perfectly balanced as possible; there are conditions which, as one will understand without difficulty, strictly fall within the question of initiatory qualifications. It is hardly necessary to add that it is not a question any more of "pedagogical" exercises: profane education certainly has nothing to do with initiation, nor with spirituality which it would rather suppress; and we shall only remark, on this point, the astonishing misunderstanding that consists in taking for a "science of life" what is intended precisely only to enable the being to surpass life, as well as all other limitations of conditioned existence. These considerations are amply sufficient to show how erroneous is the pretension of "psychologism" to annex certain Oriental doctrines and their proper methods of "realization"; but this is still only what we could call its childish side, of a naivety that sometimes goes as far as foolishness, yet incomparably less grave than the truly "satanic" side to which we are now going to return in a more precise way.

This "satanic" character shows itself with very particular clarity in psychoanalytic interpretations of symbolism, or of what is given as such rightly or wrongly; we make this restriction because, on this point as on so many others, if one wanted to go into detail, there would be many distinctions to make and many confusions to dissipate: thus, to take only one typical example, a dream in which some "supra-human" inspiration is expressed is truly symbolic, whereas an ordinary dream is in no way so, whatever the external appearances may be. It goes without saying that psychologists of earlier schools had already often attempted, themselves too, to explain symbolism in their own way and reduce it to the measure of their own conceptions; in such a case, if it is really a question of symbolism, these explanations by purely human elements misunderstand what constitutes its whole essence; if, on the contrary, it is really only a question of human things, it is no longer anything but a false symbolism, but the very fact of designating it by that name still involves the same error on the nature of genuine symbolism.

This applies equally to the considerations engaged in by psychoanalysts, but with this difference that then it is no longer a question only of the

human, but also, to a very large extent, of the “infra-human”; one therefore has to deal this time not with a simple lowering, but with a total subversion; and every subversion, even if it is not immediately due, at least, to misunderstanding and ignorance, is always, in itself, properly “satanic.” Moreover, the character generally ignoble and repugnant of psychoanalytic interpretations constitutes, in this respect, a “mark” that cannot deceive; and what is even particularly significant from the point of view where we place ourselves is that, as we have shown in one of our works, this same “mark” is found precisely also in certain spiritist manifestations; it would certainly take a great deal of good will to see there nothing more than a simple “coincidence.” The psychoanalysts can naturally, in most cases, be just as unconscious as spiritists of what is really under all that; but both appear rather as equally “led” by a subversive will using means of the same order, if not exactly identical, a will which, whoever the beings it is incarnated in, is certainly well conscious at least in them, and corresponds to intentions undoubtedly very different from all that those who are only the unconscious instruments by which its action is exerted can imagine.

In these conditions, it is too evident that the principal use of psychoanalysis, which is its therapeutic application, can only be extremely dangerous for those who submit to it, and even for those who practice it, for these are things that one never handles with impunity; it would not be exaggerated to see in it one of the means put into operation to increase as much as possible the imbalance of the modern world, and of which another example is provided to us by the similar use of “dowsing,” for there again it is psychical elements of the same quality that come into play. Those who practice these methods are, we doubt not, firmly persuaded on the contrary of the beneficence of their results; but it is precisely thanks to this illusion that their diffusion is made possible, and this is where one can see the whole difference that exists between the intentions of these “practitioners” and the will that is at work of which they are only collaborators and tools. In reality, psychoanalysis can only have the effect of bringing to the surface, by making it clearly conscious, all the content of those “underworlds” of the being that form what is called the “subconscious”; this being,

moreover, is already psychically weak by hypothesis, for, if it were otherwise, it would not at all feel the need of resorting to a treatment of this sort; it is all the less capable of resisting this "submersion," and it risks strongly sinking irretrievably into this chaos of reckless unleashed dark forces; if, however, it nevertheless manages to escape from it, it will at least retain, throughout its life, an imprint that will be in it like an ineffaceable "stain."

We know well what some may object to this by invoking a similarity with the "descent into Hell," such as is encountered in the preliminary phases of the initiatic process; but such an assimilation is completely false, for the goal has nothing in common, no more, moreover, than the conditions of the "subject" in the two cases; one could only speak of a kind of profane parody, and this in itself gives to what is at stake a character of quite worrying "counterfeit." The truth is that this supposed "descent into Hell," which is not followed by any "ascent," is quite simply a "fall into the quagmire," according to the symbolism used in certain ancient mysteries; it is known that this "quagmire" notably had its representation on the road that led to Eleusis, and that those who fell there were profanes who claimed initiation without being qualified to receive it, and who were therefore victims only of their own imprudence. We shall add only that there do indeed exist such "quagmires" in both the macrocosmic order and the microcosmic order; this is directly connected with the question of the "external darkness," to which we made allusion recently; and one could recall, in this regard, certain evangelical texts whose sense accords exactly with what we have just indicated. In the "descent into Hell," the being definitively exhausts certain inferior possibilities in order to be able to rise afterward to higher states; in the "fall into the quagmire," the inferior possibilities seize him, dominate him and end up entirely submerging him.

We have just spoken of "counterfeit"; this impression is reinforced by other observations, such as that of the denaturation of symbolism that we pointed out above, a denaturation that tends, moreover, to extend to everything that essentially bears supra-human elements, as the attitude taken with regard to metaphysical and initiatic doctrines such as Yoga

shows, which precisely brought us to develop the present considerations. It is not all, and there is even something else which, in this regard, is perhaps even more worthy of remark: it is the necessity imposed upon anyone who wants to practice psychoanalysis professionally to be "psychoanalyzed" himself beforehand. This implies above all the recognition of the fact that the being who has undergone this operation is never again the same as before, or that, as we were saying a moment ago, it leaves him with an ineffaceable imprint, like initiation, but, in a way, in the reverse sense, since, instead of a spiritual development, it is a development of the inferior psychism that is at stake here. On the other hand, there is here a manifest imitation of initiatory transmission; but, given the difference in nature of the influences that intervene, and knowing that however there is an effective result which does not allow one to consider the matter as reducible to a simple simulacrum without any scope, this psychical transmission would be much rather comparable, in reality, to that which is practiced in a domain such as magic, not to say more precisely witchcraft. There is moreover a very obscure point concerning the very origin of this transmission: the invention of psychoanalysis is a very recent thing; whence do the first psychoanalysts obtain the "powers" that they communicate to their disciples, and by whom themselves were they "psychoanalyzed" in the first place? This question, which is nonetheless logical to ask, is probably very indiscreet, and it is more than doubtful that a satisfactory answer will ever be given to it; but there is no longer any need to recognize, in such a psychical transmission, another "mark," truly sinister by the associations to which it gives rise: psychoanalysis presents, by this side, a rather terrifying resemblance to certain "sacraments of the devil."

THE HEART AND THE WORLD EGG

After all the considerations that we have already set forth in our previous articles on the various aspects of the symbolism of the cave, there remains for us still to deal with another important point: namely, the relationships of this same symbol with that of the World Egg; but, in order that this may be properly understood and more directly connected with what we have said up to this point, we must first of all speak of the symbolic relationships of the heart with the World Egg.

One might perhaps be surprised at this at first sight and discern nothing other than a certain similarity of form between the heart and the egg; but this similarity itself can have true significance only if there exist more profound relationships; now the fact that the omphalos and the betyl, which are incontestably symbols of the center, are often of ovoid form, as was notably the omphalos of Delphi[1], clearly shows that this must indeed be the case, and this is what we must now explain.

In this regard, what it is important to remark before all else is that the World Egg is the figure, not of the "cosmos" in its state of full manifestation, but of that from which its development will be effected; and if this development is represented as an expansion accomplished in all directions starting from its point of departure, it is evident that this point of departure will necessarily coincide with the very center; thus the World Egg is therefore indeed "central" in relation to the "cosmos"[2].

The biblical figure of the terrestrial Paradise, which is also the "Center of the World," is that of a circular enclosure, which may be regarded as the horizontal section of an ovoid form just as well as of a spherical one; let us add that, in fact, the difference between these two forms consists

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1 We have examined these symbols more particularly in Le Roi du Monde; we have also indicated there that, in other cases, they assume the conical form, which is in direct relation with the symbol of the mountain, so that one finds again here the two complementary figurations of which we have spoken recently.

2 The symbol of the fruit also has the same meaning, in this connection, as that of the egg. We will no doubt return to this point in the continuation of these studies; and we will note even now that this symbol has, in addition, an obvious link with that of the garden, and therefore with the Earthly Paradise.

essentially in the fact that that of the sphere, extending equally in all directions from its center, is truly the primordial form, whereas that of the egg corresponds to an already differentiated state, deriving from the former by a sort of "polarization" or doubling of the center[3].

This "polarization" may moreover be considered as being effected as soon as the sphere accomplishes a movement of rotation around a determined axis, since, from that moment on, all the directions of space no longer play uniformly the same role; and this marks precisely the passage from one to the other of these two successive phases of the cosmogonic process, which are symbolized respectively by the sphere and by the egg[4].

That being said, there remains in sum only to show that what is contained in the World Egg is truly identical to what, as we have said previously, is also symbolically contained in the heart, and in the cave insofar as the latter is its equivalent. What is at issue here is this spiritual "germ" which, in the macrocosmic order, is designated in the Hindu tradition as Hiraṇyagarbha, that is to say literally the "golden embryo"[5]; now this "germ" is indeed truly the primordial Avatara[6], and we have seen that the place of the birth of the Avatara, just as of that which corresponds to it from the microcosmic point of view, is precisely represented by the heart or the cave.

One might perhaps object that, in the text that we cited at that time[7], as moreover in many other cases, the Avatara is expressly designated as Agni, whereas it is said that it is Brahmā who envelops himself in the World Egg, called for this reason Brahmāṇḍa, in order to be born

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3 It is thus that, in plane geometry, the unique center of the circle, by doubling itself, gives birth to the two foci of an ellipse; this same doubling is also figured very clearly in the Far-Eastern symbol of Yin–Yang, which is not without relation either with that of the World Egg.

4 Let us further note, with regard to the spherical form, that, in Islamic tradition, the sphere of primordial pure light is the Rūḥ Muḥammadiyya, which is also the "Heart of the World"; and the entire "cosmos" is vivified by the "pulsations" of this sphere, which is properly the barzakh par excellence (see on this subject the article by T. Burckhardt in the December 1937 issue).

5 See Man and His Becoming According to the Vedanta, ch. 13.

6 The designation of Christ as seed in various Scriptural texts relates to this, and perhaps we will speak again of this on another occasion

7 Katha Upanishad 1: 14.

there as Hiraṇyagarbha; but, apart from the fact that the different names designate in reality only various divine attributes, which are always necessarily in connection with one another and not separate entities, it must be remarked more particularly here that, gold being considered as the "mineral light" and the "sun of metals," the very designation of Hiraṇyagarbha effectively characterizes it as a principle of an igneous nature; and this reason is added moreover to the central position in order to assimilate it symbolically to the Sun, which, besides, is also in all traditions one of the figures of the "Heart of the World."

In order to pass from there to the microcosmic application, it suffices to recall the analogy that exists between the piṇḍa, the subtle embryo of the individual being, and the Brahmāṇḍa or the World Egg[8]; and this piṇḍa, insofar as it is the permanent and indestructible "germ" of the being, is identified moreover with the "nucleus of immortality," which is called luz in the Hebrew tradition[9].

It is true that, in general, the luz is not indicated as situated in the heart, or at least that this is only one of the different localizations of which it is susceptible in its correspondence with the corporeal organism, and that it is not that which relates to the most usual case; but it is nonetheless exactly, among the others, where it must be according to all that has already been said, that is to say, where the luz is in immediate relation with the "second birth."

In fact, these localizations, which are also in relation with the Hindu doctrine of the chakras, refer to as many conditions of the human being or phases of his spiritual development: at the base of the vertebral column, it is the state of "sleep" in which the luz is found in the ordinary man[10]; in the heart, it is the initial phase of its "germination," which

8 Yatha pinda tathà Brahmānda (see Man and his Becoming according to the Vedanta, ch. 13 and 19).

9 For further developments on this point see again The Lord of the World. It may be noted also that the assimilation of the 'second birth' to a 'germination' of the luz clearly recalls the Taoist description of the initiatic process as 'endogeny of the immortal'.

10 The serpent coiled around the World Egg, and sometimes figured around the omphalos and the betyl, is, in this regard, Kuṇḍalinī coiled around the nucleus of immortality, which is also in relation with the symbolism of the "philosophers' stone"; to this "inferior" position of the luz, direct allusion was made in the Hermetic formula Visita interiora terrae, rectificando invenies occultum lapidem; the "rectification" is here the "straightening" which marks, after the descent, the beginning of the ascending movement, corresponding

is properly the "second birth"; at the frontal eye, it is the perfection of the human state, that is to say reintegration into the "primordial state"; finally, at the crown of the head, it is the passage to the supra-individual states; and we shall again find the exact correspondence of these various stages when we return, in a forthcoming article, to the symbolism of the initiatic cave[11].

to the awakening of Kuṇḍalinī, and the complement of the same formula designates moreover this "hidden stone" as veram medicinam, which also identifies it with amṛta, the nourishment or drink of immortality.

11 Let us note again that the designation of the "golden embryo" suggests a certain relationship with alchemical symbolism, which is moreover confirmed by parallels such as those we have indicated in the preceding note; and we shall also see, in this regard, that the initiatic cave corresponds in a remarkable way to the Hermetic athanor; there is no reason to be surprised at these similarities, for the process of the Great Work, understood in its true sense, is in the end nothing other than the very process of initiation.